

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING INFORMATION

RESPECTING THE PRACTICAL OPERATION

OF

The Present System of Subsisting the Army;

Pursuant to a resolution of the Senate.

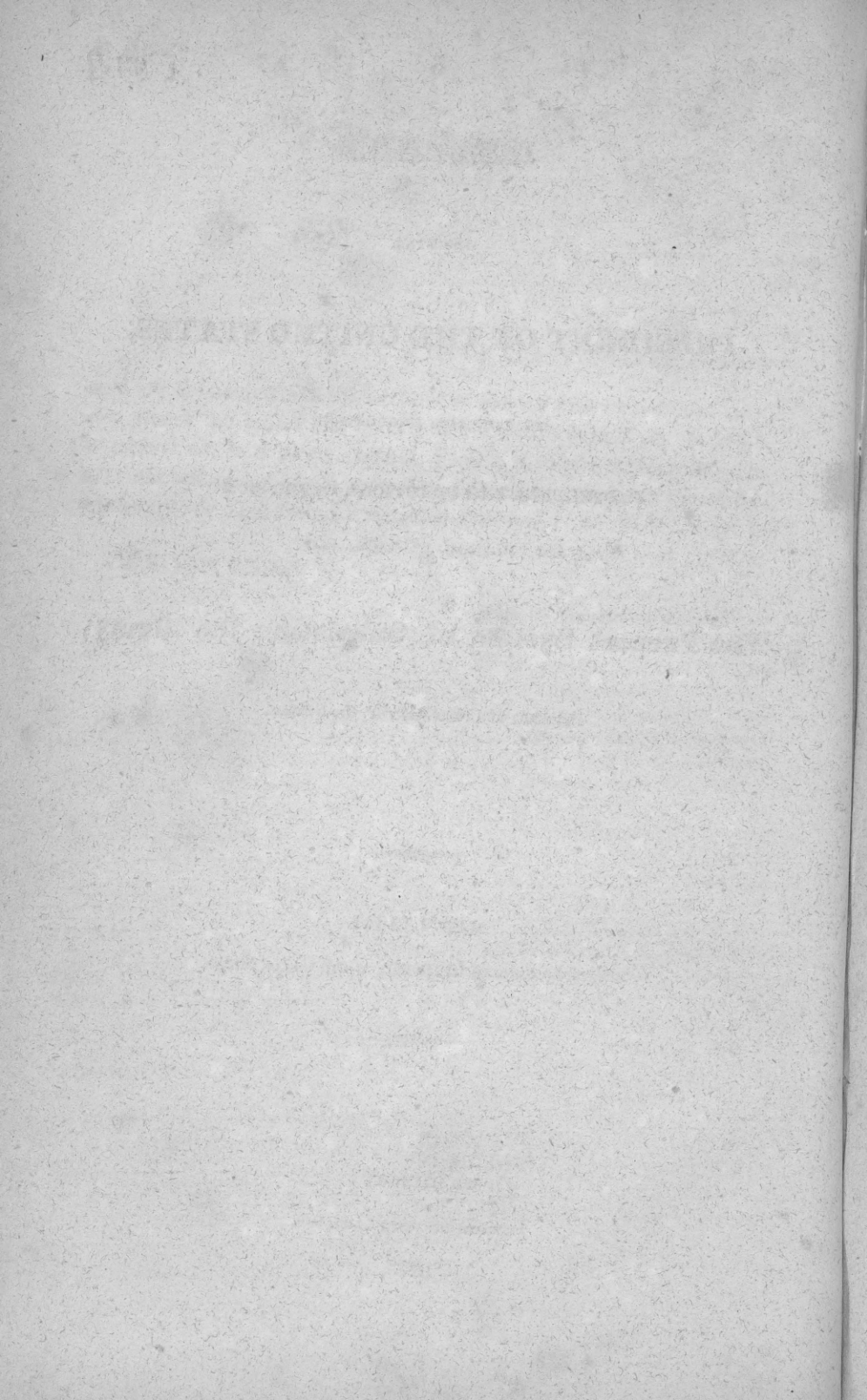
MAY 1, 1822.

Printed by order of the Senate of the United States.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY GALES & SEATON.

1822.

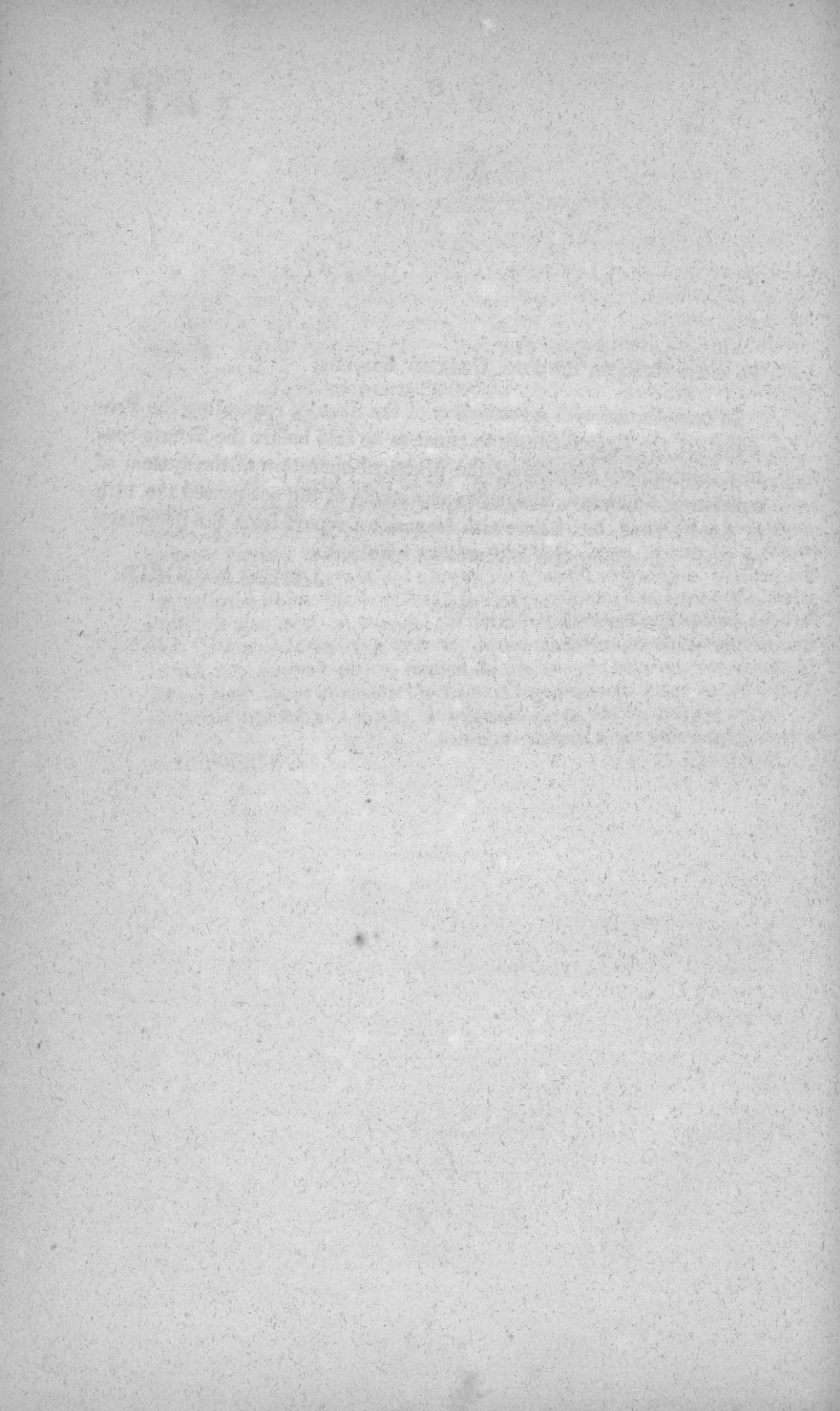


TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES:

In compliance with a resolution of the Senate, requesting the President of the United States to cause to be laid before the Senate certain information respecting the practical operation of the system of subsisting the army, under the provisions of the act passed the 14th of April, 1818, &c. I herewith transmit a report from the Secretary of War, furnishing the information required.

JAMES MONROE.

WASHINGTON, *April 30th*, 1822.



DEPARTMENT OF WAR,*29th of April, 1822.*

The Secretary of War, to whom was referred the resolution of the Senate, requesting the President of the United States “to cause to be laid before the Senate a report of the practical operation of the system of subsisting the army, under the provisions of the act passed the 14th day of April, 1818; together with a comparative view of the present and former mode of supplying the army, stating the rank of the officers, their number, and the number of the soldiers in actual service for each year; together with the amount of their pay and subsistence from the commencement of the military establishment;” has the honor to transmit, herewith, statements of the Second and Third Auditors, of the Commissary General of Subsistence, marked A, B, C, and a return of the army marked D, by the Adjutant General, which furnish the information required.

J. C. CALHOUN.

A.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

Second Auditor's Office, April 25, 1822.

SIR: In obedience to the resolution of the Senate of the 20th December last, requesting the President of the United States to cause to be laid before that honorable body "A report of the practical operation of the system of subsisting the army under the provisions of the act passed the 14th day of April, 1818, together with a comparative view of the present and former mode of supplying the army; stating the rank of the officers, their number, and the number of the soldiers in actual service for each year, together with the amount of their pay and subsistence from the commencement of the military establishment," and referred to this office, I have the honor to inclose a statement shewing the whole amount charged to contractors on the books of this office, for the supply of provisions to the United States' troops and Indians, from the 1st June, 1816, to the 31st May, 1817.

It is proper to observe, that all the accounts relating to the subsistence of the army, prior to the former period, were settled by the Accountant of the War Department and turned over to the additional Accountant; and that, subsequent to the 31st May, 1817, they have been adjusted in the office of the Third Auditor.

I have the honor to remain,

With high respect, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM LEE.

Hon. J. C. CALHOUN,
Secretary of War.

Amount paid to Contractors, for the supply of provisions to United States' troops and Indians, from the 1st of June, 1816, to the 31st of May, 1817.

Amount brought to their debit by warrant	-	-	-	-	-	-	717,424 01
Amount of provisions deposited by former contractors, and with which the contractors for the above period are charged	-	-	-	-	-	-	97,922 86
Amount due the United States by contractors, on account of former contracts, brought to their debit on their accounts for the above period	-	-	-	-	-	-	29,309 72
Amount charged to contractors on account of their having failed to supply	-	-	-	-	-	-	11,069 73
							<u>\$855,726 32</u>

From which deduct:

Amount of provisions issued to Indians	-	-	-	-	-	19,466 87	
Amount of provisions deposited on the 1st of June, 1817, to be disposed of by succeeding contractors, and with which they were charged	-	-	-	-	-	35,881 73	
						<u>55,348 60</u>	
						<u>\$800,377 72</u>	

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, SECOND AUDITOR'S OFFICE,

April 24th, 1822.

WILLIAM LEE.

B.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

Third Auditor's Office, April 24th, 1822.

SIR: In pursuance of the resolution of the honorable the Senate of the United States, requesting the President of the United States "to cause to be laid before the Senate a report of the practical operation of the system of subsisting the army, under the provisions of the act, passed the 14th day of April, 1818; together with a comparative view of the present and former mode of supplying the army; stating the rank of the officers, their number, and the number of the soldiers in actual service for each year, together with the amount of their pay and subsistence, from the commencement of the military establishment;" and referred by you to this office for such information as the books and accounts on file therein would enable me to furnish; I have the honor to state, that all the accounts of the War Department which had been settled to the year 1812, and a number of those settled in that year, were transmitted, according to law, to the Treasury Department, for examination and revision, and were lost or destroyed at the burning of the public buildings, in 1814, and, consequently, the information called for as to the period prior to the year 1813, cannot be furnished, the books of the office not having been kept with reference to the objects of inquiry, so as to enable me to ascertain the facts; and that the accounts settled during that year, and those subsequently settled, though within the reach of the office, are of such a description, that the information could not be obtained without an investigation almost equal to another settlement of the accounts of all the paymasters and contractors during the late war, and requiring, therefore, a great length of time.

Subsequent to the war, the duty of adjusting the accounts for the pay and subsistence of the troops, devolved on the Second Auditor, till the 1st of June, 1817, when the accounts for subsisting the army were directed to be audited in this office. From that date to the 1st of June, 1819, the commencement of the commissariat system, constituting two entire years, the amount for provisioning the army, so far as the accounts of the contractors rendered and settled have enabled me to ascertain the same, was \$1,561,076 25. Of this sum, however, it is proper to remark, \$370,364 35 remain to the debit of the contractors, and for the recovery whereof suits have been instituted, which have not been decided on; and that, for such amount as may ultimately be recovered, the system for supplying the army by contract will be entitled to credit. But it is proper also to observe, as to the balances thus in suit, that it is believed credits to a large amount remain to be claimed for provisions issued, and the vouchers for which have not been rendered; and that large deductions have been made on the settlement of some of the accounts for charges not

deemed admissible by the accounting officers, and the allowance whereof is nevertheless dependant upon the decisions of the courts and juries to whom the cases will be referred.

With great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

PETER HAGNER, *Auditor.*

The Hon. J. C. CALHOUN,
Secretary of War.

C.

SUBSISTENCE OFFICE,

Washington, April 24, 1822.

SIR: I have the honor to lay before you a statement showing the cost of subsisting the army for one year, commencing on the first of June, 1820, and ending on the 31st of May, 1821. This year has been selected, in preference to the one preceding, because of the expense necessarily attendant on the first operations of the new system. The contract year, commencing 1st of June, 1816, has been selected to contrast with the second year of the new system, because the contractor's accounts for the subsequent years are not finally adjusted, as appears by the letter of the Third Auditor, and the amount may be hereafter affected by decisions which may take place on them. In ascertaining the number of men subsisted in the contract years, under the former and present system, I have deemed it most equitable to take the number of men in service, in the month of December, in each year, that period being the middle of the contract year.

In furnishing this statement, it may be proper to remark that, although the price of provisions was considerably lower in the year commencing on the 1st of June, 1820, yet the contracts were necessarily made in the fall of 1819, when provisions were not so much reduced in price, as during the period embraced in the settlement. It may, also, be proper to remark that considerable expense has accrued from the regular issue of fresh beef at the posts on the Missouri, Upper Mississippi, and at Green Bay, by reason of the great distance cattle had to be driven, and the loss sustained in wintering them at those cold and remote points. I beg leave, also, to draw your attention to the subject of the commutation of the hospital rations, by which a supply of fowls, milk, vegetables, and other necessaries, is furnished to the sick, at considerable cost to the subsistence fund. The greatest expense, however, has accrued from the improvement in the quality of the ration issued under the new system. The pork is rather better than prime, but not so good as navy mess; and the flour is fine, and sometimes superfine. Under the old contracts

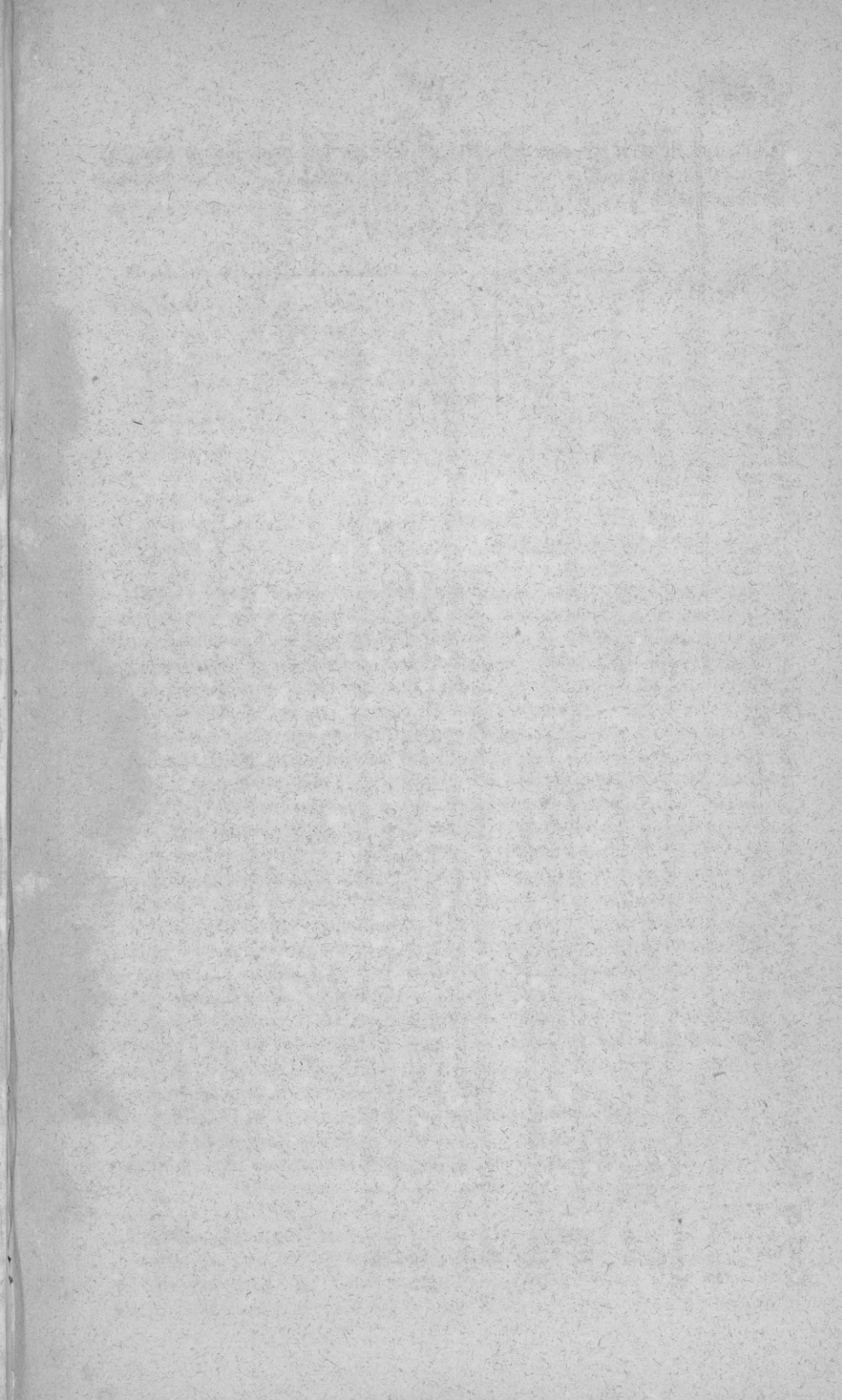
pork and flour of inferior brands could be issued, provided it was pronounced "merchantable" by two citizens; and I know of no instance wherein this was not the case.

With great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

GEO. GIBSON, *C. G. S.*

The Hon. JOHN C. CALHOUN,
Secretary of War.



Cost of Subsisting the Troops of the United States for one Year, commencing the 1st day of June, 1820, and ending the 31st day of May, 1821.

[92]

Amount of subsistence stores remaining on hand 31st day of May, 1820, at the different posts	-	91,895 65
Do. paid to general contractors for the period embraced	- - - - -	371,915 15
Do. paid to special contractors for complete rations, furnished recruits at the different rendezvous	- - - - -	6,394 81
Do. of purchases made by the assistants, acting assistants, and military storekeepers, of fresh beef and hospital stores, not included in the contracts	- - 137,681 61	
Do. of stationery, weights, measures, scales, &c.	- - - 5,804 41	
		143,486 2
Do. of transportation, as per statement of the quartermaster general	- - - - -	37,526 63
Do. of pay of the commissary general, his assistants, acting assistants, and storekeeper; as, also, officers, and others detailed for duty in the commissariat	- - - - -	20,814 45
Do. of the salaries of two clerks employed in the office at Washington	- - - - -	2,150 00
Do. of the contingent expenses of the office	- - - - -	607 36
Do. of balances in the hands of contractors, 3,200 dollars, and of assistant commissaries, 2,205 46, unaccounted for	- - - - -	5,405 46
	Dollars	\$ 680,195 53

From which deduct

Amount of subsistence stores on hand 31st of May, 1821, at the several posts	-	117,535 67	
Do. sales of damaged provisions, of sales to officers, and sales of empty boxes, barrels, &c.	-	12,194 69	
Do. issues to Indians on the frontier posts; to laborers on fortifications, to men on board the revenue cutter at Mackinaw; and oxen turned over to quartermaster's department	-	30,413 31	
Do. Issues to Spanish troops upon taking possession of the Floridas	-	2,064 61	
Do. Beans; which article has been added to the ration under the commissariat system	-	17,008 46	
Do. Sums recovered from contractors, as forfeitures on failure to deliver	-	1,177 29	
Do. Subsisting 433 men more, during the year embraced by the caption; and the year 1816, making 158,045 rations, at 14½ cents per ration	-	22,912 82	
			203,306 85
			<u>\$ 476,888 68</u>
Amount of subsisting the army under the old system	-	800,377 72	
Do. do. do. new system	-	476,888 68	
			<u><u>\$ 323,489 04</u></u>

GEO. GIBSON, C. G. S.

JAMES GADSDEN, Colonel and Adjutant General.

[illegible]

